



AQUA-TNET

**SOCRATES THEMATIC NETWORK
AQUACULTURE, FISHERIES AND AQUATIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
2008-11**

**LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME
ERASMUS
Academic Network**

Minutes of the start-up Steering Committee Meeting

22 January 2009

Held at the Laboratory of Aquaculture & Artemia Reference Center
Ghent University, Belgium

Project Acronym: AQUA-TNET

Project title: Aquaculture, Fisheries & Aquatic Resource Management TN

Contract number: 2008 – 3209 / 001 – 001

Project number: 142245 – LLP -1 – 2008 – 1- BE – ERASMUS - ENW

AQUA-TNET

1st Steering Committee Meeting Gent University, Belgium 22nd January 2009

Agenda

Time	Detail	Presented by
9.00	Welcome Round-table introductions History of project	Patrick Sorgeloos
	Project Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Review of the Objectives- Planned Results- Project end-users and linkages to other initiatives- Overview of Budget	AquaTT
	Presentation of the Project Management Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Secretariat (AquaTT and Gent) responsibilities and Tasks- project services and dissemination- Support to WP's- Interaction between WP's – Cross Cutting, horizontal etc.	AquaTT
	Financial and Administrative Systems <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Highlights from financial handbook, any changes from last project- Budgeting- Reimbursement of claims	Gent
	Review and agree on methodology & timetable <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Activating Working Groups- Working Group Meetings- Annual Event 2009	AquaTT
	AOB	
17.30	Closure of meeting	

Meeting Objectives:

The objective of this meeting was to bring together the secretariat and Work Package Leaders to review the overall project and develop a plan of Action for the Implementation of AQUA-TNET in 2009

Participants

Odd-Ivar Lekang	UMB, Norway
Lluís Tort	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain
Graham Pierce	University of Aberdeen, UK
John Bostock	Institute of Aquaculture (Stirling) UK
David Murphy	AquaTT, Ireland
Michael Moulton	UMB, Norway
Marieke Reuver	AquaTT, Ireland
David Bassett	FEAP
Wim Verbeke	Gent University, Belgium
Jean Dhont	Gent University, Belgium
Goncalo Santos	EAS-SG
Anamaria Rekecki	EAS-SG
Patrick Sorgeloos	Gent University, Belgium
Gilbert van Stappen	Gent University, Belgium
Hilde Joncheere	Observer
Apologies:	
Peter Bossier	Gent University, Belgium
Margaret Eleftheriou	AMC, Ireland
Zsigmond Jeney	HAKI, Hungary
Zuzanna Pieniak	Gent University, Belgium

Minutes WP Coordinator meeting

Welcome and Introduction

Professor Sorgeloos, the Network Coordinator of AQUA-TNET, welcomed the participants to the first Steering Committee Meeting of AQUA-TNET2.

Apologies for absence were received from Peter Bossier (Ghent University), Margaret Eleftheriou (AMC), Zsigmond Jeney (HAKI) and Zuzanna Pieniak (Ghent University).

Prof. Sorgeloos gave an introduction, highlighting some aspects from the first and new phase. In AQUA-TNET2005-08, contact had been made with the European Aquaculture Technology and Innovation Platform (EATIP). This platform has quite recently been set-up to provide a structure where all relevant stakeholders in the European Aquaculture sector will come together in order to promote and coordinate research and development that will improve the competitiveness of the European aquaculture industry. Several of AQUA-TNET's core partners are strategic members, and AQUA-TNET will serve as a vehicle for strong relations between the academic and vocational education sectors in our domains and other stakeholders. Prof. Sorgeloos informed the meeting that everything is in place now, and that the Knowledge Management Thematic Area (1 of 7 focus areas) is being considered as one of the most important pillars, cross-cutting with the other thematic areas.

AQUA-TNET2 is a continuation of AQUA-TNET1; many of the services will continue to be provided, and even expanded, and AQUA-TNET will continue being a forum for ensuring the latest developments in training and education are developed and promoted. There will however be some particular aspects to which more attention will be paid. More emphasis will be placed on involvement of the horizontal Work Packages; Industry, Research, Students and Consumers, in order to ensure that the network will meet the needs of its end-users.

The organisation of the Secretariat will change slightly. Mr. Gilbert van Stappen will be in charge of the day to day coordination of the secretariat in Gent, with Prof. Sorgeloos still maintaining the overall coordination. The Project Officer at Ghent University will change, and an application procedure has been set up to appoint a new Officer as soon as possible. A plan of action will be made by the Secretariat (AquaTT and Gent), ensuring that in the new phase, tasks and responsibilities are clearer and network members know who to contact regarding different matters..

Finances; There has been no budget cut during negotiations, the EC grant will be 600.000 Euro. There will be a budget allocation per Work package per year allowing WP leaders to propose how they would like to spend their budget. This budget will be subject to annual reviews and if required adjustments may take place due to under spends or non delivery of WP tasks.

Mr David Murphy explained that this meeting will focus on the network methodology.

Mr Murphy stated that we should encourage spin-off projects during this phase in order to resource specific initiatives which will require significant time investments.

Round table introductions

All participants gave a brief introduction of themselves.

Project Overview

Ms Marieke Reuver gave an overview of AQUA-TNET, with an introduction to AQUA-TNET, the European context (Lisbon Strategy), AQUA-TNET's objectives, the structure, planned results and outputs, and highlights for each Work Package. Network principles were explained and end-users of the project and how they benefit from it. Linkages to other initiatives are in particular the WAVE and VALLA project and the EATIP initiative. A short overview of the budget was given; total budget of the project will be 1.5 million euro, of which 600.000 euro Community Grant.

It was stated that for the future, the continuous process of educational reforms needs to be underpinned by a strong dynamic network that is aware of and responsive to the far-reaching implications of the changes. INPUT is CRUCIAL to the continued success of the network.

Project Management Plan

Ms Marieke Reuver gave a presentation on the Project Management Plan. A full time Secretariat composed of 2 project officers (Ms Marieke Reuver in AquaTT and somebody yet unknown at Ghent University) will manage and service the network. They will coordinate all network activities, provide administrative support to WP leaders and organise all network events. Additionally they will coordinate the network services, dissemination and liaise with the EC on contractual matter. A detailed Plan of Action regarding exact responsibilities between the 2 organisations will be set up.

The project services were highlighted once again, and input from the WP coordinators was requested. If you have any information about e.g. Education initiatives, Upcoming events, WP results & outcomes, Mobility opportunities, you should let the Secretariat know.

It was emphasized that the Secretariat is there to support the network and the WP coordinators. The Secretariat will support the WP's with producing deliverables and outputs, organise and arrange core group meetings and annual events, and will keep track of progress. The WP coordinators were asked where they would like to see more input and help from the Secretariat.

Suggestions:

- Prof Sorgeloos would like to see the PhD portal developed in AQUA-TNET1 used more; the target is to add at least 10 new universities in the 2009. WP leaders were asked for active input.
- It was suggested to use a Project Management online tool, ProjectPath, for the management side of the project.
- Prof. Verbeke suggested that the Secretariat could give support and help with the surveys that several Work Packages will undertake. The secretariat could e.g. help with web programming, monitor progress and send reminders. A generic tool such as SurveyMonkey will be used for the online surveys.
- Mr Tort suggested that it would be helpful if the Secretariat would follow up with Work Packages, keeping track of deliverables (status) and set up milestones for each year.
- It was mentioned that it would be good to give the structure of the Management Team, with a clear division of tasks, so WP leaders know where to turn to for assistance.

Financial and Administrative Systems

Mr Van Stappen explained the reimbursement procedure regarding Travel & Subsistence; the same expense claim form as in AQUA-TNET1 will be used, which can be found on the project webportal. As a new rule, reimbursement claims will have to be submitted within 45 days after the end of the meeting.

Details on reporting on activities and outcomes and financial reporting will be explained and discussed in the Erasmus coordinator's meeting that will be held 12 and 13 February 2009 in Brussels. Ghent staff will attend this meeting.

Review and agree on methodology & timetable

Each WP was briefly reviewed so that the steering committee had a full understanding of the project structure and methodology as described in the proposal.

It was requested that during WP meetings a minute taker is appointed and that the minutes are immediately written up (1 week) after each meeting and approved by participants. If a member of the secretariat is present at the meetings they will take the minutes.

The WP coordinators will have to decide on their Working Groups, as at the moment the numbers per Work Package are skewed, and a re-distribution is necessary. At proposal stage partners indicated their interest in a specific Working Package, and these people will be contacted. The Secretariat will provide each Work Package coordinator with a list of people that indicated interest in their WP. A system will be set up to vet and select core members for each WP. It is decided that the initial selection procedure will be done again; a letter with explanations regarding all the Work Packages, including activities for year 1, will be sent to partners, who can then indicate which WP they would like to join, the final decision is down to the WP leader. It is commented that it is possible to add institutions and contact persons during the life of the project, so WP coordinators could approach people from outside the network for their core groups.

Each Work Package is discussed in detail:

WP1

Objectives are discussed. There are many people who indicated an interest in Work Package 1 and the WP coordinator needs to decide upon the core group members. Prof. Sorgeloos would like to see a cluster of Universities piloting initiatives in this WP as a proof of concept exercise.

WP2

Peter Bossier had indicated that he would like to make Work Package 2 a little bit more tangible and increase the fun in working on WP2. The work plan for the first year is:

- Map the currently available purpose-designed PhD courses in Europe in the AQUA-TNET domain (content, success rate, cost, ...);
- Based on the outcomes of AQUA-TNET1, that identified the needs for courses, identify the need for courses that are not available in the partnership;
- Identify the universities/ person or groups of universities/persons that are capable/willing to design such course;
- Develop a common standard/structure and guidelines for PhD programmes (methodology, content, uniformity of evaluation), probably by starting an audit of

the currently available courses in that respect and the feedback they get from the course attendants;

- Interact with the students and get their feedback on the type of course available or that should be available: get their feedback on the design of the courses.

WP3

Objectives are discussed. Mr Tort comments that in the new phase he would like to develop a large network of companies and research institutes outside the network. It would be good to establish a national contact point in each country in the network. High priority in the new phase will be given to Objectives C and D; to deeper involve the research institutes in the mobility framework and to involve and coordinate the companies in the mobility framework by means of better identification, better information and opportunities both for movers and for companies.

It is commented that it would be good to include also virtual mobility. Prof. Sorgeloos adds that an aim should be to have institutions offering a course provided by streaming; each month at least one. Successful case studies will be placed on the web to demonstrate the success of the network.

WP4

WP4 coordinator – Graham Pierce – explains his interest for the subject. He points out that he is not limiting his scope at the present, and will try to get more partners in his Work Package. He would also like to draw input from other disciplines as well, and run surveys through the project website.

WP5

WP5 coordinator – John Bostock – states that they will build upon previous work done in AQUA-TNET1, but that there will be more academia-industry interaction in the new phase. The outputs of WP5 will be a resource for people in the industry too. This WP has close links to WP8 and it is envisaged that the core group will be the same.

WP6

This Work Package will tie in with the VALLA project, and there will be a lot of cooperation with this project. It is necessary to determine the scope of Lifelong Learning within this WP.

WP7

WP7 will work with the Student Group on their language needs. Perhaps a new online questionnaire will be developed to assess need for language provision for post-graduate work. Also, via PESCALEX2 work on the language learning game has begun. The Language game was presented as a separate poster in the CLIL conference in Tallin, in October 2008. The WP coordinator will also give a poster presentation in the Conference on "Options and Practices of the Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) Practitioners" in Heraklion on February 8, 2009. WP leader needs to clarify whether the work in this WP is only vocational or also includes academic levels?

WP8

WP8 interlinks strongly with WP5, and is cross-cutting, meaning it will help the other Work Packages wherever it is needed. The decision to split up WP5 and WP8 has been made because the group thought it was useful to work on issues themselves, as well as giving support to other Work Packages. The WP5 & 8 group will work together and plan their meetings together. They will also try and get support and funding for a spin-off project.

WP9

Dissemination and outreach activities will continue as they have been done in AQUA-TNET1.

WP10

Prof. Sorgeloos states that we must make a special effort to involve the horizontal WP's. The interaction must come from all sides, and not just only from the WP coordinator side. WP10 will look at both training needs and training offerings.

WP11

The Industry WP felt that in AQUA-TNET1 the Industry came in the project too late, so it is good that the horizontal WP's are now included and involved from the start-up meeting already. It is requested that minutes of all the core group minutes will be distributed to the Industry WP, who will further distribute and get feedback for the project.

Also, if any of the other WP's have any ideas as to who the Industry WP could include, they are welcome to suggest people and organisations.

WP12

The WP coordinator mentions that WP12 has 2 different names in the project proposal which is confusing: "Consumer Representatives" and "Consumer and Societal Issues". It is noted that it is necessary to involve Consumer Organisations, but that there are not that many existing, and how to involve consumer organisations into the network? It is suggested to contact Alistair Lane of the EAS. It is also commented that retailers have now 'discovered' aquaculture, and that they know the 'normal' consumers as opposed to Consumer Organisations who more represent the outspoken consumer. The idea is to pick up ideas from consumers, as they are not in a position to determine the Education Curriculum.

WP13

The EAS-SG representative introduces the new website: www.eassg.org and mentions that there is now a facebook group, that is working quite well. In AQUA-TNET2 the Student Group will do a needs-analysis to identify generic skills and would like input from research and industry. It is commented that it would be good to work together with the Consumer Group regarding the needs analysis survey. It is planned that any results and output will be disseminated to students, through the new website and the newsletters.

Prof Verbeke suggests that for the needs-analysis, the same tool as for the Consumer Group can be used, but targeted at different audiences.

Project Path

Mr Murphy presents Project Path, an online Project Management tool, that will be used to manage AQUA-TNET2. At the moment it will be used only as a tool for the Working groups in general, but we could set it up per Work Package if necessary. Prof Sorgeloos expresses his concerns for an online tool, regarding data backup and reliability of the provider. David Murphy agreed to clarify any concerns and if deemed suitable implement the system.

Suggestions and ideas

- Prof. Sorgeloos suggests holding Video Conferencing between 2 partner institutions, which can be offered by Ghent University by streaming. The set-up could be a 1 hour presentation (40 minutes presentation and 20 minutes Questions & Answers). In this way institutions can promote themselves. Some AQUA-TNET partners institutions

already have something similar in place, such as for example Stirling University who has lunch time presentations, and Wageningen University, who every so often invite Industry representatives to give presentations. These 2 partner institutions are probably willing to share their material with the network.

- It is suggested that it would be good to have more core group discussions through Video Conferencing. WP5 comments that they have done this before already, with varying success, but that it is certainly a good option.
- Prof. Sorgeloos asks for input regarding the choice for an external evaluator. The external evaluator has to be invited for the Annual Events too.
- Prof. Sorgeloos would like more Thematic Networks involved in AQUA-TNET, not as a partner as such, but to have more interaction and involvement.
- Mr Dhont suggests a Master student could be involved in network work, for example to help setting up the databases and surveys and analyse the results.

Event Planning:

It has been discussed what would be the best set-up of the core group meetings, and in what order the meetings can be best held. It is commented that both set-ups (separate core groups meetings and combine) are valuable, but that the actual work is done in core group activities. A solution would be to combine the core group meetings, but keep most of the time for the core groups separately, and a small plenary session. Networking can be done in the breaks as well.

When there are joint core group meetings, the focus should be mainly on the core group meetings, and a minority of time will be allocated for plenary sessions. Particular times together, e.g. breaks and plenary sessions, will be identified and there will be good management of overlap (core members who participate in several Work Packages). Core group meetings will be 2 full days.

It is recommended that in between the planned meetings, VC conference meetings can be held (e.g. skype).

Timeline and location of events in year 1 will be:

1. Start-up Steering Committee Meeting (this meeting)
2. Individual WP core group meetings (WP1-8): sometime before Easter (= 12 April 2009)
3. Start-up meeting Stakeholder groups (= stakeholders (WP10-13) + coordinators of all other WP's), suggested date: 16/17 April 2009, in Galway (Ireland) or Ghent (Belgium)
4. Annual Event 2009, suggested date: 18/19 June 2009, in Algarve (Portugal) or Girona (Spain).

The Secretariat will approach potential venues.

It has to be noted that the EAS 2010 Conference will be in Porto (Portugal) which could be a good opportunity to co-organize the AQUA-TNET Annual Event 2010. In that case the AQUA-TNET Annual Event 2009 should not be located in Portugal in order to not repeat the same country in consecutive years.

At the start-up meeting for the Stakeholder groups the content of the Annual Event 2009 will be finalised.

The secretariat will work out what will be the task and responsibilities for each Work Package for the first year.

Summary of Action points:

Project Management

- All WP coordinators are asked for an active input into the PhD portal (<http://www.aquaculture.ugent.be/aquatnet/index.html>). Please inform the Ghent Secretariat about any PhD defences that can be put on the site.
- A Project Management online tool – ProjectPath – will be set up (by AquaTT Secretariat) and used for the management side of the project.
- The AquaTT Secretariat will set-up Project Path for Work Package leaders and send out instructions to the WP leaders.
- Mr Murphy will find out about back-up procedures and systems of ProjectPath.
- A detailed Plan of Action regarding exact responsibilities between the 2 organisations will be set up (by the Secretariat).
- A clear Management Plan will be set-up and distributed (by the Secretariat) to the Steering Committee, making it clear for WP coordinators where to turn to for assistance.

Financial and Administrative Systems

- Reimbursement claims will have to be submitted within a certain time period that has to be decided upon (by Ghent Secretariat).
- The budget will be allocated clearly per WP, (Ghent Secretariat).

Review and agree on methodology & timetable

- WP coordinators have to appoint a minute taker for each Work Package meeting.
- The AquaTT Secretariat will draft a letter with explanations regarding all the Work Packages, including activities for year 1 and send it to all partners, who can then make a final decision on which WP they would like to be active within.
- Secretariat to provide the WP coordinators with a list of the partners that indicated their interest in their Work Package.
- Core group compositions have to be final by 15 February 2009.
- The Secretariat will calculate the budget available to each Work Package, so WP coordinators can make their own decisions regarding amount of core members attending core group meetings, etc.
- The Secretariat will set a maximum budget for the Annual Event.
- The WP coordinators will distribute core group meeting minutes to the horizontal Work Packages, who will further distribute and get feedback for the project.
- The secretariat will work out what will be the task and responsibilities for each Work Package for the first year

Event Planning

- Ghent staff will attend Erasmus coordinator meeting on 12/13 February 2009
- WP leaders must liaise with the secretariat and decide where and when WP core group meetings will be held (sometime before Easter (= 12 April 2009))

- Decide where and when the Start-up meeting Stakeholder groups will be held (suggested date: 16/17 April 2009, in Galway (Ireland) or Ghent (Belgium))
- Decide where and when the Annual Event will be held (suggested date: 18/19 June 2009, in Algarve (Portugal) or Girona (Spain)).